

**By Don Chaddock, The Telegraph**  
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With Folsom Lake looking more like a mud hole than a reservoir, Republicans and Democrats at odds over reforming American health care and doing all this while grappling with a growing federal deficit, Rep. Dan Lungren has his hands full.

Lungren is no stranger to politics or nosy journalists. He was elected to Congress at age 32 in 1978, representing the 34th district. He served there for a decade. In 1990 he was elected as the state's Attorney General, where he helped author the controversial "three-strikes" law. He unsuccessfully ran for governor 11 years ago. A few years later, he decided to return to Congress.

Last November, he handily won re-election to a third term to the 3rd Congressional District seat, where he has served since 2005.

Sitting in Lungren's Gold River office, he talked about the area, the economy and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's management of Folsom Lake Reservoir.

The lake dropped more than seven feet of elevation in just the first few weeks of November. Earlier in the spring, the lake boasted record-high levels.

"One of the driving forces is environmental," he said. "They also have to get (the reservoir) lower during flood season."

But, he wasn't so sure the federal bureau that regulates the dam and water flow was doing so in

the best interest of the communities here and down stream.

"The question is, are the restraints appropriate?" he said. "We have real concerns in this state regarding water. ... We have ignored the problem."

He said Folsom residents are more apt to be aware of the lake's receding shoreline because it's in their backyard.

"Folsom pays attention because you can drive by (the lake) and see the water level," he said.

He said he's proud of the spillway project at Folsom Dam, undergoing construction now, and the new bridge. Of course, like some in town, he's unhappy with the name.

"The name 'Folsom Lake Crossing' is disappointing for many reasons," he said. "The first is that it doesn't cross the lake."

While he jests, he said the name could have been something different that would help draw people to the region.

"I thought, 'What's a way we can make this a destination site?' People would come to see a Johnny Cash bridge," he said.

As for water storage, he still favors the construction of a dam in Auburn and is critical of the state's revocation of the fed's water rights at the dam site.

He said flood control and water storage are major issues facing his district.

## STIMULUS REACTION

"The federal government gave out money it didn't have," Lungren said. "We're now facing (up to a) \$1.5 trillion deficit as far as the eye can see. ... Obviously, (the stimulus package) didn't work."

He called the stimulus package "politically driven" and said the government should have given tax breaks to individuals and businesses if they wanted to see more of an impact on the economy.

He said the money, if it was going to be spent regardless, should have gone to projects such as bridges and equipment for the troops.

"We know they are going to (need to) be purchased anyway," he said. "It's a necessary obligation of the government."

Instead, he said, "what we did was make a lot of promises."

Lungren makes no bones about where he stands on the reasoning behind the stimulus.

"It was a terrible tragedy in the midst of an economic downturn. We poured kerosene on the fire," he said. "I've held my tongue on this, but we've got to get our priorities in order."

